

## **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 14, 2019**

**5:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Mike Montello, Jim Zajkowski, Craig Kittel

Others Present: Jeremiah Wendt, Craig Yehlik, Dave Pufall, Joel Enders, Mike Darrow, Lori Brinkman

Jim Zajkowski called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Mike Montello moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Jim Zajkowski and carried.

Mike Montello moved to approve the minutes from the October 18, 2018, meeting, seconded by Jim Zajkowski and carried.

### **Children at Play Signs**

The City occasionally receives requests for Children at Play signs from residents intending to safeguard children in roadways from vehicular crashes. This request, and the presence of these signs, is not unique to New Richmond and has received a great deal of study from other communities and transportation agencies. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) publishes the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which serves as the guide for all transportation agencies to provide standard signs that will be easily recognized by motorists and which will provide maximum effectiveness. The MUTCD does not include any variant of the "Children at Play" signs. The MUTCD does have a standard pedestrian symbol warning sign, typically used at designated crosswalk locations, and a playground symbol used where playgrounds are located in close proximity to a street. The MUTCD allows for the use of warning signs with word messages other than those specifically outlined in the manual, however, it includes the following standard: "The use of warning signs shall be based on an engineering study or on engineering judgment." Additionally, the following guidance is inserted: "The use of warning signs should be kept to a minimum as the unnecessary use of warning signs tends to breed disrespect for all signs."

Jeremiah Wendt explained that studies show these signs are not effective in slowing down traffic speeds. They can give parents false security in letting children play in the street. The signs are not enforceable. Recently, there was a request to have a sign installed in the Peninsula Heights subdivision. Police and Public Works staff have monitored traffic speeds in the neighborhood, and found that speeds are generally under the posted limit of 25 mph. Police Chief Craig Yehlik observed traffic and children playing on several occasions in that neighborhood, and he also spoke with several property owners who live in Peninsula Heights. He noted that there are many children in the neighborhood running and biking and sometimes going into the street without looking first. Most vehicles drive slowly through the neighborhood, seemingly aware there are children present. Some residents noted that, while most drivers are conscientious, there appears to be one teenage driver in particular who is less careful.

Jeremiah recommends not to install Children at Play signs. He emphasizes that City staff and policy makers do care about the safety of our children and his recommendation is based on the studies of effectiveness of these signs and does not have to do with sign costs.

Mike Montello made a motion to restrict "Children at Play" sign installations going forward, seconded by Craig Kittel and carried.

### **Winter Maintenance Policy**

Jeremiah Wendt explained the newly created Winter Maintenance Operations Policy, which details the snow and ice control operations of the City of New Richmond. Noah Wiedenfeld assisted with the preparation of this policy. There was discussion on the policy. Staff recommends approval of this policy and if approved, it would go to the February City's Council meeting for full Council approval.

Jim Zajkowski made a motion to approve the Winter Maintenance Operations Policy as presented, seconded by Craig Kittel and carried.

### **West First Street Parking**

City staff was approached in December by the owner of a rental property on Knowles Avenue near West First Street to discuss options for overnight parking for tenants. Discussion included possible designated parking spaces and alternative side parking on West First Street. Based on past conversations with the Public Works Committee, staff indicated that designating parking spaces is not an approved practice. Staff also explained that alternate side parking is in effect on Minnesota Avenue. Staff analyzed the current snow removal process on West First Street and based upon this process does not feel that alternate side parking would be feasible.

Staff does not recommend any changes to the parking regulations in this area. Staff does recommend and tries to connect property owners to make shared parking arrangements with adjacent property owners and will continue to do that in this case.

Mike Montello made a motion to not change the parking regulations along West First Street, seconded by Jim Zajkowski and carried.

### **Snowblower Equipment**

In most areas of the City, snow can be left piled in banks along the streets after being plowed. This is not true in the downtown (area along Knowles Avenue, one block of side streets adjacent to Knowles Avenue, and public parking lots). The snow in these downtown areas must be completely removed because of the sidewalks, lack of building setbacks, and volume of parking in these areas. This task is accomplished by creating windrows of snow which are then conveyed into the back of a dump truck by a loader-mounted snowblower. The use of a snowblower in this application has become standard practice over the last several decades and it allows for the snow-hauling process to be completed in one night. The City owns two snowblowers for this purpose: a 1977 SMI blower and a 1998 Wildcat blower. Both manufacturers have gone out of business since the machines were produced, making repair parts hard to find. The SMI blower has been more reliable over the years, however, it did become inoperable during the first snowfall of this winter and the Wildcat blower was used. While the Wildcat is newer, the design of the machine is less effective and less robust, and it is showing obvious signs of failure. The performance and maintenance issues of the Wildcat have limited it to a backup role only. Staff was able to locate parts and fix the SMI blower, however, staff recommends purchasing a new/newer blower for next year.

Operations Manager Dave Pufall and Director of Public Works Jeremiah Wendt have been researching what other Wisconsin and Minnesota municipalities use for snow removal along with costs of new and used blowers. They have identified two possible machines to look into further. One is a LaRue machine and the other a SnoGo machine. Investment in a new blower would serve the needs of the City for the next 15 to 20 years. Staff recommends using the repaired SMI blower for the duration of this year and adding a new blower to the 2020 Capital Improvement Projects list with a critical priority.

Mike Montello made a motion to use the SMI blower for this year and to budget for a new blower in the 2020 Capital Improvement Project plan with a critical priority rating, seconded by Craig Kittel and carried.

### **2019 Sidewalk Plan**

At the beginning of each year, staff develops a plan for the construction of new sidewalks and the repair/replacement of existing sidewalks based on current needs and the adopted budget. Jeremiah presented the proposed 2019 sidewalk plan, which identifies 5,170 sq. ft. of sidewalk for replacement in 21 locations throughout the City. 1,805 sq. ft. of this total sidewalk is adjacent to City property (Paperjack Park and the New Richmond Cemetery). There are no areas identified for construction of new sidewalks in 2019. The City's costs are estimated to be \$24,418.75, which is approximately 81 percent of the total amount budgeted for 2019 sidewalk maintenance. Property owners are assessed 50 percent of costs based on adjacent footage while the City pays the other 50 percent. Sidewalks repaired/replaced adjacent to City property is paid for entirely by the City. State Statute requires a preliminary resolution, public notices, public hearing, and a final resolution before assessments can be assigned to individual property owners. Staff recommends approval of the proposed 2019 Sidewalk Plan and authorization to advertise for bids. Bid results will be included when this is presented to the City Council, which is anticipated at the March 11 meeting.

Mike Montello made a motion to approve the 2019 Sidewalk Plan and authorized the Public Works Department to advertise for bids according to the repairs/replacements outlined in the 2019 Sidewalk Plan, seconded by Craig Kittel and carried.

### **Declaration of Surplus Equipment**

Jeremiah explained that Public Works staff regularly reviews existing equipment inventory and identifies opportunities for enhanced efficiencies, lower costs, and higher quality of service. As part of the 2019 review, staff identified several pieces of equipment during the consolidation of the Parks and Streets departments that are redundant, obsolete, or no longer needed. Staff would like to declare these items as surplus City property and dispose of via public auction. The auction would be conducted through the WI Surplus Auction website, which staff have utilized successfully in the past. Items include:

1. Two roll-up doors
2. Used playground equipment
3. Multi-level park & camp grills
4. Sediment logs
5. Approximately 200 18-gallon recycling bins
6. Two welding screens
7. Skateboard t-shirts (to be donated)
8. 20-gallon waste containers
9. Decorative commercial waste containers
10. Orange construction fence
11. Two grinder wheels
12. Two Briggs and Stratton motors
13. Office desks
14. Filing cabinets
15. Four 12-foot one-way front plows
16. Grader V-plow
17. Sand blaster
18. Hydraulic floor jacks
19. Parts washer

Mike Montello made a motion to declare the equipment noted above as surplus property and authorize Staff to auction the equipment off publicly with proceeds from park equipment going to the Park Land Trust Fund and the remainder to the Capital Replacement Fund, for equipment replacement, seconded by Craig Kittel and carried.

### **Communications and Miscellaneous**

- It has been requested that the curb be painted yellow around the crosswalk on Starr Avenue at East 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The warmer weather has led to rain which has been freezing and thawing, with no place for the water to run off, making sidewalks re-freeze and/or remain icy. The Public Works staff has been giving warnings to property owners to remind them they have to continue to keep their sidewalk clear of ice and snow. In the spring we may need to address drainage issues in certain areas.
- Jeremiah brought up the topic of focusing on Knowles Avenue street maintenance in 2019 rather than alleyways. The alley to the east of the Fire Department and United Methodist Church is slated for repair in 2020.

Mike Montello moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Craig Kittel and carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lori Brinkman